

M 2313

LINCOLN *and* DOUGLAS

□ □ □

THE PEORIA DEBATES

and

LINCOLN'S POWER

□ □ □

A Broadside Published 1866 by

Wm. H. Herndon

75 Copies

Privately Printed, 1917

H E Barker

LINCOLN AND DOUGLAS.

THE PEORIA DEBATES AND LINCOLN'S POWER.

The writer of this has been placed wrongly on a particular record. The work to which allusion is made is a Biography of Mr. Lincoln, written and published in Springfield, Mass. I have hitherto abstained from exposing this mistake, first, because I thought it might injure the sale of the Biography, and second, because I knew the people would soon see the error. It is now time to speak. The facts are both interesting and important; they show Douglas's opinion of the strength of Mr. Lincoln; they show the goodness of Mr. Lincoln; and they explain an event of interest. Hence I assert that the facts are interesting and important, and should therefore be known, in justice to all.

Now for the facts. Senator Douglas made a speech in the city of Springfield, Illinois, in 1854. It was delivered to a large and intelligent audience in the Hall of the House of Representatives, October 4th, 1854; it was made in the day time, and during the State Fair. Mr. Lincoln was present at the speech, heard it attentively took notes, and prepared himself to answer it the next day. The next day, early at one o'clock P.M., Mr. Lincoln made his appearance in the same hall and then there spoke to a similar audience—equal in number and intelligence.

Senator Douglas spoke for about two and one half hours the day before. Mr. Lincoln spoke on the 5th of October about three and one-half hours. Much enthusiasm prevailed at the time of these speeches. Senator Douglas replied to Mr. Lincoln on the same day and to the same audience. Douglas in reply spoke eloquently and energetically for about one hour. Senator Douglas at that time had a published list of appointments—say commencing at Springfield, October 4th, at Peoria, October 10th, at Lacon on the 17th, at Princeton on the 18th, and at Aurora on the 19th. Mr. Lincoln's friends asked—may actually petitioned Mr. Lincoln, praying that he would follow Douglas and answer him whenever and wherever he spoke. Douglas did go to Peoria to fill his appointments; he spoke in Peoria according to published notice on the 16th of October 1854.—Mr. Lincoln did follow Senator Douglas to Peoria and did hear him speak.—He did take notes—did arrange them, and did answer Senator Douglas, say at 7 o'clock in the evening of that day in the same house. Senator Douglas I presume was present. Senator Douglas replied, as at the Hall of the House of Representatives in Springfield, he concluding both debates. It was the fixed determination of Mr. Lincoln to follow Senator Douglas to his appointments, and to the end. He had made full preparations to go to Lacon, Princeton and Aurora, as well as elsewhere.

After the debate was over Senator Douglas, probably on October the 17th, sent for Mr. Lincoln at Peoria on the way to Lacon. Mr. Lincoln did go and see Senator Douglas: they had a private conversation about the speeches that were to be made. Senator Douglas at that meeting said to Mr. Lincoln substantially, if not in words, this: "Mr. Lincoln, you have made me more trouble on this Territorial question, and the facts and laws of their organization, with the wants and purposes, in the govern-

ment, since its organization than all the members of the Senate of the United States. You know what trouble they have given me. You have given me more trouble than all the opposition. I now propose and say to you: If you will go home, and make no more speeches at my appointments I will go to no more of my published places of speaking, and remain silent. I can make nothing off you, and you can't off me. "You will be done, Senator Douglas; I don't wish to crowd you," replied Mr. Lincoln. Douglas' remaining published places were Locan, Princeton and Aurora. Senator Douglas did go to Lacon. Lincoln did follow. Senator Douglas made some excuse to his friends at this place that his throat was sore. Mr. Lincoln said he would take no advantage of Senator Douglas' situation.

The two great men then understood each other, and Lincoln in kindness and nobleness never insinuated what was the matter, nor did he crowd Senator Douglas. Mr. Lincoln made his promises good faithfully and really kept them to the end, in violation in fact and spirit. Mr. Lincoln returned to his home in the city of Springfield, Illinois, about the 19th of October, 1854. He remained in this city till the election was over, making no more speeches, I say, during that canvass. Several of Mr. Lincoln's friends met him in his office some days after the 19th of October. Some of these men were the original petitioners spoken of before. These men, or some of them are as follows: Peyton L. Harrison, Benjamin F. Irwin—a petitioner—Isaac Cogdall, and myself. Mr. Irwin probably asked him why he did not follow Senator Douglas, as he had promised to do as understood. This placed Mr. Lincoln in a dilemma; his word was out to follow and answer Senator Douglas and the petitioner asked him why he did not follow. Mr. Lincoln after a few moments' reflection then told the reasons, enjoying privacy on all as above given; he good naturedly said in mitigation or excuse: "Senator Douglas flattered me into the arrangement, and you must not blame me."

A few months—say one or two months—after Mr. Lincoln's assassination, a gentleman from Springfield, Mass., came into my office and presented me with a letter of introduction from a friend in Chicago, as my memory serves me. Probably the letter was from my friend, Horace White, of the Chicago *Tribune*. The New England gentleman—a member of the Massachusetts Historical Society—was informed probably at Chicago that I was writing an analytical life of Mr. Lincoln: he was so interested in this city. He made known his business and asked me several questions—none of which did I object to—was really desirous of helping the gentleman, and so told him: I answered the questions quickly, frankly and truthfully; he was with me taking notes for parts of two days. I told him many things, without being asked, it may be. I quit my business, dropped my professional duties for those parts of days, in order to accommodate and assist the man. He got from me what I think

valuable; he evidently thought so, because he used it in the Biography, with Mr. Lincoln's strong, gnarly sentences toned down, in some instances, to suit an over-refined, distorted taste, as I think. The *Massachusetts* gentleman goes back to his home in the East, sits down in his office, and pens the following lines, at pages 141 and 142, speaking of the Peoria debate and what I told him: "At the close of the debate, the two combatants held a conference, the result of which has been variously reported. One authority (*William H. Herndon, in a foot note,) states that Mr. Douglas said for Mr. Lincoln, and told him that if he would speak no more during the campaign, he (Douglas) would go home and remain silent during the same period, and that this arrangement was agreed upon, and its terms fulfilled. That there was a conference on the subject sought, there is no doubt, and there is no doubt that Mr. Lincoln promised not to challenge him again to debate, during the canvass, but abundant evidence exists that Mr. Lincoln did not leave the field at all, but spoke in various parts of the State."

I am not objecting to the manner of his statement, though that is not correct. I am not raising any objection on that issue. Let it stand as it is. I have italicized some words which are not so in the original. Here is a direct assertion, on my part, that Mr. Lincoln said as above stated by me. I did make the assertion as I state it. Here in the book, in the sentence quoted, is a denial of what I said, and now repeat. Would it not have been quite gentlemanly for me to correct the error, by informing me of it by letter or otherwise? If he did not choose so to do, would it not have been quite gentlemanly to have left my name out, as the author of the story, or even a part of it? There is an allegation that after the 16th of October, 1854, and after Mr. Lincoln's agreement with Senator Douglas, that Mr. Lincoln, during the canvass, of that year, did on various occasions and places address the people of Illinois on the questions of the day. One of three things is true: First, I told a lie; second, that Mr. Lincoln acted in bad faith—broke his sacred honor by addressing the people after the 16th of October; or, third, that the gentleman has no abundant evidence to prove that Mr. Lincoln, after that 16th day, did speak "in various parts of the State."

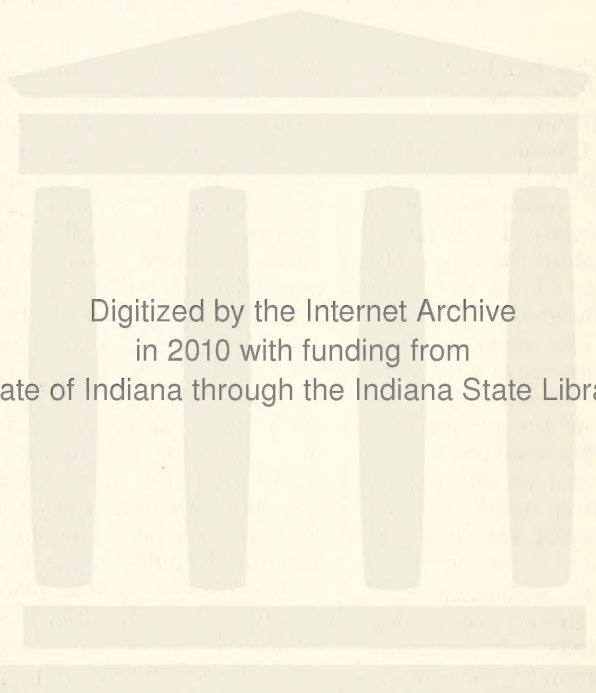
Let myself be correct, then what? Let myself suppose that Mr. Lincoln and I state a fact here, by way of note, as it were. It is said to me, on what I consider good authority, that Senator Douglas did speak at Princeton, on the 18th day of October, contrary to his agreement with Mr. Lincoln. I regret to learn this, and leave an explanation to come from Senator Douglas' friends, who should, for his credit, investigate the matter thoroughly and well. Senator Douglas may have been driven to this by the people—the Democrats and Republicans at that place and time; or he may have been bantered into it by the Republicans, who had then and there an eloquent champion on the

spot, ready and anxious to answer Senator Douglas. The gentleman here spoken of, or alluded to, was the Hon. Owen Lovejoy. There is some excuse, some explanation, some probable cause why Senator Douglas spoke at Princeton, somewhere, and it can be found out.

Now, as to that abundant evidence, let us see. Mr. Lincoln returned to his home in this city about the 19th day of October—three days after the Peoria debate; he sat down and here commenced writing out, as rapidly as he could, his Peoria speech, which, in substance is the Springfield speech, with the fire died out, made October the 5th; he was a candidate for the State Legislature at that time, probably against his will. The Sangamon Circuit Court was coming on apiece, and he must turn some of his attention to these things. The first part of Mr. Lincoln's speech appears in the *Illinois Daily Journal*—now called—October 21st. The speech runs through seven numbers of the *Daily Journal*. Mr. Lincoln was at home, writing out and correcting the proof sheets of his speech. I well know, well remember this. I so assert this now. The full speech as written out by Mr. Lincoln, first appeared, as it now stands in the *Weekly Journal*, Nov. the 2d, 1854, No. 1213. The November election by the Constitution and laws of the State of Illinois, took place—came off on the 7th day of November, 1854. There are five days between the 2d of November and the 7th. Will some gentleman show that Mr. Lincoln made, after the 16th of October, various speeches to the people of Illinois, during the canvass of that year? Will some searching, inquiring mind show any evidence by the record that Mr. Lincoln spoke at all after the day agreed upon between Senator Douglas and himself? I aver that there is no such abundant evidence of record, nor other well authenticated evidence anywhere. No man can show that Mr. Lincoln violated his sacred honor. No man can show that Mr. Lincoln ever addressed the people after his promise. I aver that he told me—rather told Benjamin F. Irwin, Peyton L. Harrison, Isaac Cogdall and myself, that he had made the agreement with Senator Douglas substantially as I state it. Men may carelessly, loosely say that Mr. Lincoln did violate his honor, by saying that he did speak contrary to the above agreement. For Mr. Lincoln's sake, and for my own sake, I appeal to, and ask for the record, or any other valid, reliable evidence, if I assert, as I do, these things, I willfully tell a falsehood; and I ought to have no quarter, and because of that I ask for none.

Feeling that I have been badly treated, and misplaced, as it were, wantonly, on the record, I am compelled in self-defense to publish this letter. It is probable that the Biography would, in another edition of the work, correct the error, but I know of no law compelling me to wait for that contingency. The publication of this letter cannot now injure the sale of his life of Mr. Lincoln.

Truly yours, W. H. HERNDON.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
State of Indiana through the Indiana State Library

<http://www.archive.org/details/lincolndoug13503hern>

71.2009.084.03503

